

Sehh'Remma and Roger

Touch Me In The Morning.

By Mike (The Old Gray Raccoon) Regan

In the nothingness, something became aware. It was a vague awareness at first, but gradually the event horizon of that awareness expanded. Like honey poured on hot cakes, slowly spreading in an ever-widening circle ---

Roger was beginning to wake up.

The first thing he noticed was there were no dreams. This was unusual for him; he was always running some data through his mind. He made most of his important discoveries while asleep. Now, however, his mind had been completely at rest. It felt good.

The analytical part of his brain came online and he tried to remember when he had experienced this profound feeling of peace before.

He thought back and could almost grasp something at the furthest reaches of memory. Not many could remember back as far as Roger was attempting at that moment; he was close to remembering the feeling of unconditional love and safety while being suckled at his mother's breast. The full knowledge of it however eluded him and he could only sense the vaguest hint.

Then his train of thought sped forward to more recent times in search of it. *Yes, I remember now. The last time I felt this way was last night when Sehh'Remma and I embraced.* Train wreck. That revelation derailed the "Memory Lane Express" rather handily. *When Sehh'Remma and I ...* This brought him awake at once. He also now became very aware that, while he was still lying in his bed, he was not there alone. He had his arms around someone, and that someone had their arms around him and their head on his chest.

Roger took a deep breath and carefully opened his eyes, glancing down.

If anything she looked even lovelier this morning. His eyes started at the tufts of fur on her ears that reminded him of a lynx and continued down the silky white fur with its scattering of brown patches to her digitigrade feet hanging about a foot off the end of the bed. *How can she sleep that way?* He wondered.

He gently stroked her soft fur. It felt so good. He remembered that it felt very good last night during their more "energetic" activities too.

But if he had to choose, he thought just cuddling with her this way felt the best. It felt ...

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There it was again; that indescribable feeling. It annoyed him. He could decipher the most difficult problems with ease, and yet this one eluded him.

He strained his mind till he thought it would explode and the only thing he could come up with was that this just felt ... *Right*.

In exasperation he gave up and pushed the problem to the side, resolving to ponder on it later.

A memory flashed into his mind of the pet cat he had when he was a teenager. She had been a calico and had also had some black and orange markings in addition to Sehh'Remma's white and brown. Whenever he would take a nap on the couch he would often wake up to find her curled up on his chest. He chuckled at the memory.

Chuckled a little too much it seems, since Sehh'Remma began to stir.

She looked contentedly up at him with her wide yellow eyes. Then, noticing her feet hanging off the bed, she rolled over with the intention to slide up higher. The problem was the bed was not overly wide and she did not realize how close to the edge she was.

She began to fall when a sudden *need* to protect her came over Roger.

He reached out and wrapped his arms around her in an attempt to pull her back onto the bed and she grabbed onto him, but the laws of leverage were against them and she ended up on her back on the floor with him on top. He had a few more scratches on his back from the involuntary use of her claws while trying to hold on.

Her momentary look of surprise faded into one of mischief and she gave a quick playful lick to the tip of his nose.

It struck him as strange, this "need" to protect her, him a five foot, six inch scrawny nerd and her, a seven foot, highly trained, physically fit bodyguard; might as well have a Munchkin to protect Hercules. But he still felt it just the same. Another one of those feelings to add to the pot and sort out later, he thought with a sigh, but right now it looked like she had other, more interesting pursuits in mind.

One thing he did decide on, however, was that they could not go on this way. They must find a way to speak to each other. So with that decision out of the way, it was only logical that he would next decide to learn Sehh'Remma's language.

A sudden irritating sound intruded into the paradise Roger shared with Sehh'Remma. He reached up and retrieved his watch from the stand by the bed. He silenced the alarm and with a sour look noted the time on its face. Showing it to her he

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gave her a gentle kiss on the muzzle, rolled off of her, stood up and began to prepare for his day.

Sehh'Remma watched him walk over to the cabinet to get a pair of boxers. His tailless behind fascinated her. She wondered if he felt somehow off balance without one. Everything about this furless being looked strange but not unpleasant, she thought.

She got up off the floor, sat cross-legged on the bed and observed him going about his normal morning routine. She felt comfortable with him. Thinking back to last night she noted that he had followed her lead. Her pleasure seemed more important to him than his own. How long had she sought just such a male, only to find him in this most unlikely place and form? She liked Roger, she felt safe with him. Somehow she knew he would not knowingly do anything to hurt her, unlike some of her own kind she had gotten involved with.

She also had to admit that he was not completely furless; it was just rather sparse. He had some on his arms, legs, chest and um – 'other' areas of his body. He had a good amount on top of his head and was just finishing carefully grooming it. But he did not groom his body fur. Maybe since they did not have much they thought it not needed? She couldn't ask him. She didn't know his language and he didn't know hers. She decided to fix that as soon as possible.

Suddenly he did something that astounded her. He picked up a container and it dispensed a foam substance into his hand. Then he put it on his face and picked up a device she recognized as a razor and began to pass it over his face.

She had seen doctors and field medics shave fur before to clear a wound to treat but she had not scratched him there that she could see. The fact of the matter was he was bleeding more after he had shaved. This was another thing to find out about.

She got up and put on her off duty garment while Roger finished brushing his teeth. Her personal care items were in her cabin so she would have to return there.

Roger finished his shaving and dental care, he carefully replaced his personal items on the shelf. He had to special order these items and they would be difficult to replace. Roger had an allergy to perfumes and if he used scented items he would break out in an itchy rash.

He stepped out of the tiny bathroom and met Sehh'Remma by the door and they embraced again. She noted he smelled clean, unlike the other humans on board, especially the female. They had stopped using the strong scents before boarding but they would still be detectable on them for quite a while. Roger opened the door and they stepped into the corridor.

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###

The engineer looked up when he heard the door open and, seeing it was his relief, he checked the time.

“<What are you doing here this early? Shift change isn't until first hour.>”

“<Did you hear what happened last night?>” the new arrival asked.

“<No. I've been stuck in here, remember.>”

“<Well as I understand it, that big bodyguard Sehh'Remma decided to be hospitable and share our human friend's bed so he would not feel so alone. He misunderstood what she was there for and by the time I came by he was already in sickbay.>”

“<How did you find this out?>”

“<I got there just in time to overhear Rrsh'Dhana explaining to Sehh'Remma what it meant to a human male when a female got into his bed. She said she hoped his injuries were not too severe and I saw them cleaning up a trail of blood that led towards the doctor.>”

“<Ouch! The poor guy.>”

“<You can say that again. Only the biggest, toughest of the soldiers seem to make any move on her and they only last a few hours or maybe overnight before she throws them out. Of course to hear them talk it was they that left her.>”

“<Yeah, remember the last guy? He decided that he wasn't going to take 'No' for an answer and show her who was really in charge around here. He's still in the hospital back home.>”

“<Sure do. He did show her alright. Somehow I don't think we'll be seeing what she left of the professor for the rest of the trip.>”

Their shared laughter was interrupted when the door opened and Roger came strolling happily in with a spring in his step.

Their jaws dropped in shock. Aside from some bandages on his arms he seemed to be relatively undamaged. His body language was that of a male who had succeeded instead of being shredded.

“A very good morning to you both,” Roger greeted them with a large smile.

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They looked at each other dumbfounded, each thinking the same thing. *He couldn't have! - With Sehh'Remma? Noooo ... I don't believe it!*

They moved to either side of him and each taking an arm hustled him out the door and down towards the mess hall. "Come on, let's grab some coffee and then we need to sit down and have a talk."

###

Rrsh'Dhana had just left the doctor's office after inquiring into the wounds Roger had received last night. The doctor had informed her that while the scratches on his arm had been deep and bled freely, they had not been all that serious. He mentioned that he had been able to check them again earlier that morning when Roger had come in to have some new scratches on his back looked at, but they were just minor.

How did he get more scratches? Did they fight again?

As she passed one of the security detail, she asked if he had seen Sehh'Remma. He answered that she and Roger had emerged from his cabin that morning in what appeared to be a very good mood and after a stop at her cabin to change into her uniform she had gone to the ship's mess. He believed she was still there.

Rrsh'Dhana's curiosity was piqued. She made her way to the ship's mess and found Sehh'Remma working her way through a rather large meal.

Rrsh'Dhana got herself something and returned to the table where Sehh'Remma was just finishing.

"It seems you had a good night after the misunderstanding of earlier," Rrsh'Dhana observed.

Sehh'Remma did not reply to that but only gave a silly grin.

"<Rrsh'Dhana; do you think your father would allow me the use of the tapes to learn the human language? We cannot continue being unable to speak to each other.>"

"<He'll let you use them; I'll make sure of that. I won't give him a moment's peace until he gives in, and you know how stubborn I can be,>" Rrsh'Dhana grinned.

"<Do I ever; I almost feel sorry for your father. - - - Almost.>"

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The two shared a laugh and then sat quietly sipping their tea.

Suddenly the two engineers bustled through the door practically carrying Roger between them and made a beeline for the coffee pot.

They did not see Sehh'Remma and Rrsh'Dhana sitting at the table as they hurried past.

While they were getting cups and fixing their coffee, Roger took a moment to look around the room and was delighted to see Sehh'Remma and Rrsh'Dhana there.

He approached the femme's table and gave a small bow in Sehh'Remma's direction then greeted Rrsh'Dhana. "Good morning, Rrsh'Dhana. I trust it finds you well?"

Yes, she decided, definitely a gentleman.

"I am doing well, and you?" she politely enquired.

"Very well indeed," he answered and also asked a question, "I would like to learn to speak your language. Can you give me any advice on the best course of action?"

Rrsh'Dhana pondered a moment, "Well, we do have devices for subliminal teaching of languages; however, since this is my people's first encounter with yours, we have no lesson tapes available. Sehh'Remma will be using one to learn your language."

Roger was pleasantly surprised by this and smiled at Sehh'Remma, an act that did not go unnoticed by Rrsh'Dhana.

"Then I could use this same tape?" Roger asked.

"I'm sorry, but no. She will be learning the same way I did, Wrragh'Wí, or Wolf as you call them, to your English. It requires one to know the first language and then uses it as a basis to teach the second. It cannot be used in reverse. Sehh'Remma can use it because she has already been taught the Wrragh'Wí language."

"I see," replied Roger, "since our two peoples never came into contact with each other you have no tapes to teach our language directly. How did your father acquire the wolf / human tapes?"

"That is something he refuses to talk about. The crew says only that the tapes have been in his possession for some time. I think he was hoping to open some trade negotiations with your people after the war had ended.

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“When he came home after I had left on The Winding Trail, he was furious. He began to question everyone at the spaceport and discovered which ship I had left on. He kept following my trail through reports from the crews that I had been with or those that remembered seeing me. But when he located the last freighter I was on, Masmah the supercargo told him that I had left on a Wrragh'Wi carrier headed to the war with Earth as a fighter pilot. He immediately went back to the spaceport. Once there he gathered a volunteer crew and also brought Sehh'Remma for a rescue mission to the surface if that became necessary. He was hoping the Wrragh'Wi in orbit would help in locating me.

He came out of hyperspace a distance from Earth so as not to be attacked by the Wrragh'Wi forces but was stunned to find none there. They were surprised to be hailed on the radio by a fast courier ship. The ship had been under contract to the Wrragh'Wi to deliver non-military messages, thus freeing their own ships for the war with Earth. That's when they found out about the attack of the Phoenix. The courier entered the Wrragh'Wi system in time to hear the ultimatum from the Earth ship, and the courier's captain, since he was only in this for profit, decided wisely to stay at a distance from the fighting. They saw the Phoenix destroy the Wrragh'Wi and hid until the Phoenix was gone. They came to Earth to report to the armada what had happened; he thought they might be grateful enough to offer some extra money but found it to be gone as well and assumed that it too, had been destroyed. I think the shock of the armada being gone, too, was so great they never even thought to try and sell the information to father. The Captain of the courier told them that he was going to get as far away from the Earth as he could, as fast as he could, and he advised father to do the same. When my father heard of the destruction of the Wrragh'Wi Homeworld by a single Earth ship, he stated his intention to continue the mission but would pay the passage for any who chose to, to leave on the courier; none did.

You must understand, Roger, how it looked to us. A race of beings, which we had been told by the Wrragh'Wi propaganda were violent and warlike, had just wiped out their armada and their Homeworld, and with only one ship. Yet my father still came, even in the face of those odds, to save me. We have had our fights and disagreements, and sometimes it was hard to believe that he still loved me. But when his ship appeared in orbit there was no longer any question in my mind. I was never in any danger from your people but he did not know that; he didn't even know if I was still alive. But even with that slim possibility he still came for me.”

“Your father has great love for you. He just has trouble expressing it,” Roger told her. His father had been the same. Most could not tell if he cared what his son was doing, but Roger could see how proud he was.

“I'm just glad they kept cool heads and did not draw their weapons. A fight could have started so easily.”

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Roger agreed. "A wise woman on Earth, Indira Gandhi, once said, 'You can't shake hands with a clenched fist.' It's a good thing to remember."

By now the engineers had their coffee and joined the group.

"The only way we have of teaching you our language, Roger, is for us to teach you enough so you will be able to carry on a simple conversation. The engineers and I can teach you the more common words and phrases until teaching tapes can be created for your use by the language scholars."

"An excellent idea! Instead of always speaking in English, they can slowly change to theirs and continue to teach me more as time goes on. Before you know it I will be speaking your language. Now, however, I must return to learning more about your hyperspace technology. If you will excuse me?"

At the femme's nods he turned to the engineers, "I still have to get my beverage. I will meet you back in Engineering."

They both clapped him on the shoulder and left while he went to get his drink. He did not see one whispering to the other as they left the ship's mess.

###

Roger entered Engineering and prepared to get on with the next session of training on hyperspace. Noting that both were still there, he remarked, "Why are you still here? I thought you had gotten off shift?"

"Yes, but I decided to stay and help with your first lesson," the off duty engineer said with a twinkle in his eye.

"The first thing we will teach you is how to properly greet Sehh'Remma. This greeting consists of words and gestures."

Roger nodded, listening carefully.

"First, say this and hold your arms out in front of you spread apart in a welcoming gesture, like so," The engineer proceeded to demonstrate.

Roger studied the move and then repeated the word and movements. When they were satisfied he had it right they moved on to the next part.

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“Now you will insert her name and then say this while keeping your arms straight and lowering them in front of you, bringing your hands together and clasping them so your arms and hands end up pointing at the floor in front of you,” Again they practiced the words and moves until Roger seemed to have them down.

That done the off duty engineer left and they got back to studying hyperspace physics with a break every so often so Roger could practice his new greeting.

They were deep inside a console when a soft tone got their attention. They looked and saw it was lunch time. Roger was elated and could not wait to see if Sehh'Remma was at lunch too, so he could try the new greeting he had learned. The engineer told him to go ahead and he would be along as soon as he had secured the console. Roger never saw the off duty engineer enter after he left or heard the snickering laughter.

###

Rrsh'Dhana had just seated herself next to Sehh'Remma when Roger entered and came over to their table. He seemed to be in a very good mood and gave Sehh'Remma a slight bow then turned to greet Rrsh'Dhana.

“Good afternoon Rrsh'Dhana, I hope you are well.”

“I am fine thank you Roger. You seem very happy.”

“Oh, yes! The engineers taught me a greeting that I should use to greet Sehh'Remma.”

With that he turned, smiled and began the greeting, being careful not to make a mistake. When he had finished both femme's smiles vanished and they stared at him for a few moments, then they looked at each other and collapsed in helpless fits of laughter. Roger was thoroughly confused.

When they had regained some measure of control he asked. “Did I say it wrong?”

Rrsh'Dhana began to laugh again but managed to hold herself in check enough to respond. “Before I can answer that, I need to know what you thought you were saying.”

“They told me it was ‘Hello, Sehh'Remma, you are very lovely today and seeing you brightens my whole day’.”

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Rrsh'Dhana translated for Sehh'Remma and the other giggled before replying in her own language.

“Sehh'Remma thanks you for the compliment. The answer to your question is ‘no’ and ‘yes’. ‘No’ - you did not say what you said wrong, but ‘yes’ - because what you said is not what they told you it meant.”

“I suppose they told you the hand gestures were very important and not to forget to do them?”

“Yes, they did. They had me practice to make sure I got everything right.”

“I see,” Rrsh'Dhana replied. “Roger, I am afraid you have been the victim of a cruel practical joke.”

“Then ... what *was* it I said?” he asked, puzzled.

“Well, I am sure it loses something in the translation,” she said as she stood, “but the nearest version in English is, ‘Hey, Sehh'Remma, I got what you need right here, baby!’” She also demonstrated the hand movements as well, finishing the “greeting” with her arms straight and her hands clasped as if holding something in front of her at crotch level.

Rrsh'Dhana had seen an embarrassed human turn red before, but never this deep a shade or this quickly.

Roger's mouth fell open and his knees became weak. He stumbled to the next table and sat heavily in a chair, burying his face in his hands. He had never felt so humiliated in his entire life. All he wanted to do at that moment was to find a hole somewhere, crawl in, and then pull the hole in behind him.

Sehh'Remma became concerned for Roger but calmed down some when Rrsh'Dhana explained what was happening to him.

Sehh'Remma rose and went to Roger; she placed a hand on his shoulder and said something in her own language that he did not understand.

“She says it's all right, Roger, she knows that you would never knowingly say anything like that to any female; much less to her,” Rrsh'Dhana told him.

“Now,” Rrsh'Dhana continued, “we need to teach a certain pair of engineers a lesson that this door can swing both ways.”

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She spoke a few moments to Sehh'Remma, who then nodded with a very wicked grin.

Rrsh'Dhana turned to Roger and said, "This is what we are going to do ..."

###

Rrsh'Ghanar left Rrsh'Dhana's cabin holding his sides in laughter; followed shortly by the trio of Rrsh'Dhana, Roger and Sehh'Remma. Sehh'Remma set course for Rrsh'Ghanar's cabin while Rrsh'Dhana and Roger turned towards Engineering. This was going to be fun.

###

The engineers had noticed that Roger had been gone longer than they had expected. Their consciences were beginning to bother them. What if they had underestimated her reaction? What if she had done him critical injury?

They both looked up at the sound of the door opening to see Roger standing there with a look of frustration, and they breathed a sigh of relief.

Before he could enter, though, Roger looked to the side down the corridor and smiled. "Hello, Rrsh'Dhana. Have you seen Sehh'Remma? I've been looking everywhere but haven't found her."

"No, Roger, I haven't, what's up?"

"I learned a new greeting in your language that I want to try on her."

"Oh? What type of greeting?"

"Let me show you," and Roger did, complete with gestures, inserting Rrsh'Dhana's name in place of Sehh'Remma's, in full, horrified view of the engineers.

When he had finished they heard her inquire in an icy tone, "An interesting 'greeting'; where did you learn that?"

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“Oh, the engineers have been very helpful in teaching me your language.”

“You have learned very well, you *must* come and show my father all you have learned.”

“Certainly,” and with that he closed the door, just catching a glimpse of two stunned, open-mouthed engineers.

###

Rrsh'Ghanar was in his cabin with Sehh'Remma, awaiting the other two for the next part of the plan. One unusual thing was the security watch in the corridor. Extra forces had been brought along on this trip to rescue Rrsh'Dhana and then proved to be unneeded. To keep them from getting too bored, Rrsh'Ghanar assigned them to stand watch at various points in the ship, one of which was the corridor to his cabin. None of this was necessary, but it made them feel like they were doing something.

Rrsh'Ghanar had activated a security camera in the corridor to watch for the approach of Rrsh'Dhana and Roger.

He watched the two come down the corridor past the security watch, who would be unknowingly drafted into this. She stopped at his door and opened it, then said in their own language loud enough for the watch to overhear, “<Father, it seems that the engineers have been teaching Roger very crude and vulgar things to say in our language while telling him they are polite greetings!>”

They entered the cabin and closed the door.

Rrsh'Ghanar watched the video monitor as the guard's head turned to look at the door with wide eyes and a sly grin. Yes, he decided, the word would be all over the ship by tonight. Perfect!

Then he saw something and an even larger smile filled his face. He motioned the others to the monitor where they saw one of the engineers sneak down the corridor and begin to listen at the door. Rrsh'Ghanar signaled them to be quiet and stepped over to the door. Then, using his own language he shouted, “<They taught him to say WHAT?>”

They had to lean on one another to keep from falling down with laughter as they watched the engineer run back up the corridor, almost falling over himself trying to get away as fast as he could.

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Rrsh'Ghanar suddenly got another idea. He activated the PA system and made a ship wide announcement. “<This is Rrsh'Ghanar; I wish to request all personnel to assist the human professor, Roger Thompson, in learning our language in any way they can. The engineers have already been teaching him, and I will *personally* reward them for this when we arrive home. Thank you.>”

“Well, I don't think you will have to worry about another trick like that,” Rrsh'Ghanar told Roger, still chuckling.

“<Now, as for you,>” he said to Sehh'Remma, “<Rrsh'Dhana told me you wished to use this.>” He opened a drawer in the desk and gave Sehh'Remma the tapes and a teaching machine. “<Best of luck to you both in your efforts.>”

###

The door to Engineering opened and Roger walked in. The two engineers watched him like he was a trap about to snap shut on them. “How did your visit with Rrsh'Ghanar go?” One of them asked.

“I have no idea. They only spoke in your language and since I don't know it yet, I couldn't understand a word.”

The rest of the day concerned itself with hyperspace.

The off duty engineer went to his cabin to *try* to sleep, but with what was on his mind, it was doubtful he'd succeed.

###

Roger prepared for bed. He thought back to the speed bump at lunch and was thankful the girls understood. He still felt some embarrassment over it though. The revenge on the engineers *was* sweet, however, and they would be suffering for it all the way home. What was that line from the old TV program? Oh yes, “*Revenge is a dish best served cold.*”

This day was almost perfect, he thought as he was climbing into bed.

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The door signal sounded. *Who can that be?* He wondered as he got up.

The door slid back to reveal Sehh'Remma. She smiled and walked in as Roger closed the door behind her.

Sehh'Remma went to the bed, slipped off her clothing, and climbed in.

Roger slipped beneath the covers beside her and watched as she put on the small headset, activated the teaching machine, closed her eyes and lay her head on his chest as it had been that morning. She wrapped her legs around his to keep them from hanging off the bed.

He wrapped his arms around her and thought as he drifted off to sleep, *Now the day is perfect.*